Opportunity Online Hardware Program
ALA Evaluation Question Summary

Description

Participating libraries of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Opportunity Online hardware program completed an evaluation survey as part of the annual ALA Funding & Technology Access Study. Over 785 library branches participated in the final round of the Opportunity Online hardware program. 38 of these libraries (5%) reside in the state of Nebraska.
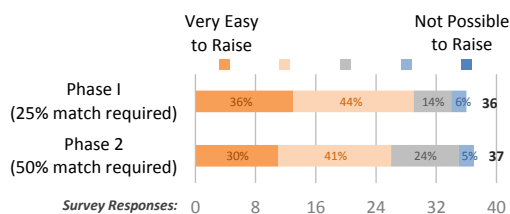
Key Findings - Nebraska

- Over 80% of participating libraries indicated that the grant program had a positive community impact in one or more ways.
- 69% of participating libraries have or will have some form of replacement/maintenance plan for public computers

- 61% of participating libraries expressed confidence in their ability to secure public funding for future technology expenses.
- Missouri libraries expressed slightly more confidence for moving forward than participants in other states.

Ease of Raising the Matching Funds

Exhibit 1. Reported ease of raising the matching funds for each phase of the program:

Very Easy to Raise / Not Possible to Raise

	Very Easy				Not Possible	Survey Responses
Phase I (25% match required)	36%	44%	14%	6%		36
Phase 2 (50% match required)	30%	41%	24%	5%		37

Survey Responses: 0 8 16 24 32 40

- 80% of grant participants expressed ease in raising the first year match funds. Grant participants as a whole found the second year more difficult, yet 71% still classified the challenge as "Easy". (Exhibit 1)

- Participants cited a number or elements of success in raising the matching funds, most noticeably demonstrating the value of free computing, advocacy, and community support. (Exhibit 2)

- 42% of library participants felt that lack of community resources was a significant barrier to raising matching funds. (Exhibit 3)

- Other barriers cited include lack of commitment/interest from government, unable to articulate value to community, and government unawareness of library technology needs. (Exhibit 3)

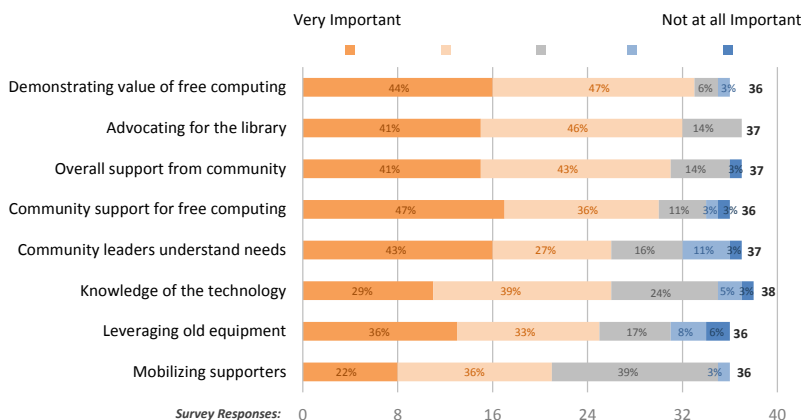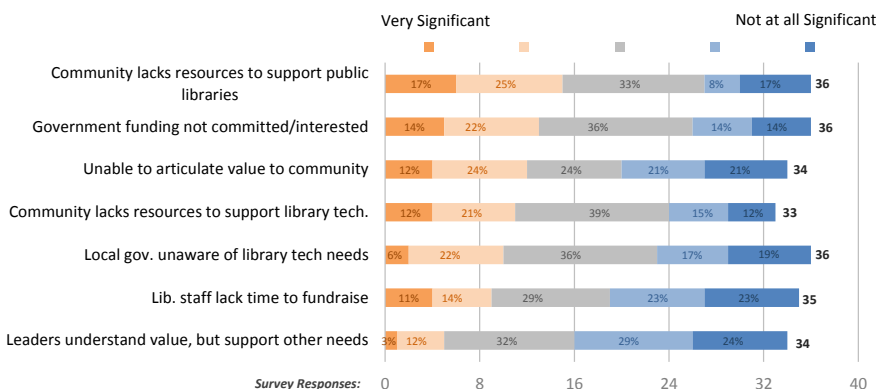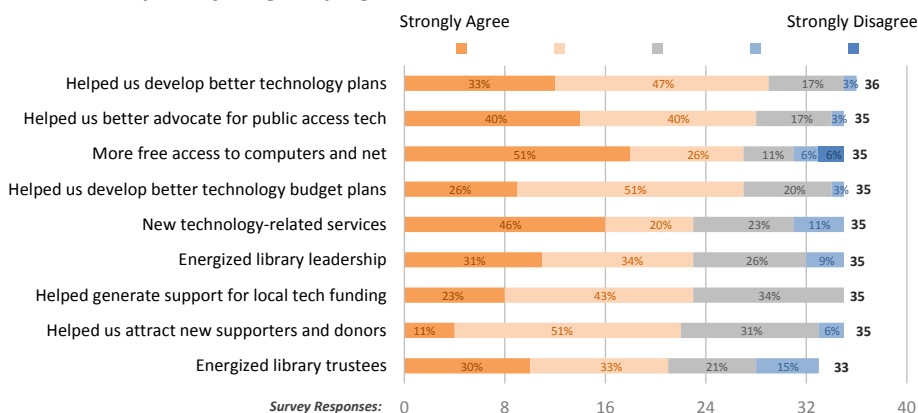*Exhibit 2. Critical elements of success in raising the matching funds:*

Very Important / Not at all Important

	Very Important				Not at all Important	Survey Responses
Demonstrating value of free computing	44%	47%	6%	3%		36
Advocating for the library	41%	46%	14%			37
Overall support from community	41%	43%	14%	3%		37
Community support for free computing	47%	36%	11%	3%	2%	36
Community leaders understand needs	43%	27%	16%	11%	3%	37
Knowledge of the technology	29%	39%	24%	5%	3%	38
Leveraging old equipment	36%	33%	17%	8%	6%	36
Mobilizing supporters	22%	36%	39%	3%		36

Survey Responses: 0 8 16 24 32 40

Exhibit 3. Major barriers to raising the matching funds: [1]

Very Significant / Not at all Significant

	Very Significant				Not at all Significant	Survey Responses
Community lacks resources to support public libraries	17%	25%	33%	8%	17%	36
Government funding not committed/interested	14%	22%	36%	14%	14%	36
Unable to articulate value to community	12%	24%	24%	21%	21%	34
Community lacks resources to support library tech.	12%	21%	39%	15%	12%	33
Local gov. unaware of library tech needs	6%	22%	36%	17%	19%	36
Lib. staff lack time to fundraise	11%	14%	29%	23%	23%	35
Leaders understand value, but support other needs	3%	12%	32%	29%	24%	34

Survey Responses: 0 8 16 24 32 40

Program Impact

- Over 80% of participating libraries indicated that the grant program had a positive community impact in one or more ways. (Exhibit 4)

- The majority of participating libraries noticed all of the positive impacts cited in the survey. (Exhibit 4)

- The top ranking impacts include help to develop better technology plans, help to better advocate for the library, and more free access to computers and the internet. (Exhibit 4)

Exhibit 4. Impacts of the grant program:

Strongly Agree — Strongly Disagree

Impact	Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree	Survey Responses
Helped us develop better technology plans	33%	47%	17%	3%		36
Helped us better advocate for public access tech	40%	40%	17%	3%		35
More free access to computers and net	51%	26%	11%	6%	6%	35
Helped us develop better technology budget plans	26%	51%	20%	3%		35
New technology-related services	46%	20%	23%	11%		35
Energized library leadership	31%	34%	26%	9%		35
Helped generate support for local tech funding	23%	43%	34%			35
Helped us attract new supporters and donors	11%	51%	31%	6%		35
Energized library trustees	30%	33%	21%	15%		33

Survey Responses: 0 — 8 — 16 — 24 — 32 — 40

Public Access Technology Sustainability

- 69% of participating libraries have or will have some form of replacement/maintenance plan for public computers. (Exhibit 5)

- 61% of participating libraries expressed confidence in their ability to secure public funding for future technology expenses. (Exhibit 6)

Exhibit 5. Does your budget include funds for ongoing replacement and maintenance of public computers? [2]
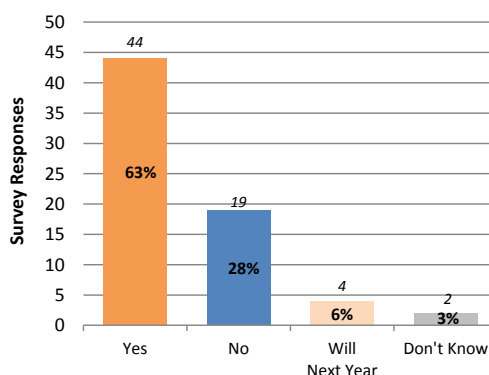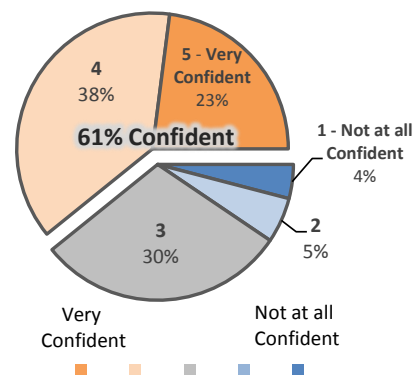
Category	Survey Responses	Percent
Yes	44	63%
No	19	28%
Will Next Year	4	6%
Don't Know	2	3%

Exhibit 6. Library confidence in ability secure public funding for future technology expenses:

61% Confident

- 5 - Very Confident 23%
- 4 — 38%
- 3 — 30%
- 2 — 5%
- 1 - Not at all Confident 4%

Very Confident — Not at all Confident

Sample Library Feedback on Grant Program [3]

Do you have any suggestions for, or thoughts about the Opportunity Online hardware grant program?
[13] There were some great materials available at the Opportunity Online Advocacy Training. I would love to see some of these materials and information publicly advertised, to make the public aware, not only of the needs of libraries but also information on the digital divide, and the impacts it has on our nation.
[14] Less paperwork??? Overall, the program has been a great help to us. Our computers were 8 & 9 yrs. old. Getting grant money made the LIbrary Foundation more willing to kick in some money to help with replacement. The Village Board has never seen any reason for computers in the library so it's no use looking to them, though they give us pretty good support otherwise. Any computer equipment we have ever had was bought with a combination of grants, donations and Foundation support.
Tailor training for small communities
[15] Need information and support to stimulate insight at the top level of our community, of those members and needs of the persons who utilize the library.